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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the development of standardized evaluation procedures for Pasco County's inservice teacher education. Since 1983, legislation requires teacher education centers in Florida to report attainment data based on measurable objectives. Using a classification system adapted from the "Rand Change Agent Study," directors and supervisors categorized each unit of their inservice components as one of seven types of inservice. An appropriate evaluation procedure designed to provide evidence of the increased knowledge and skill of participants was identified for each inservice type. These activities culminated in the generation of an inservice classification system with a concomitant evaluation strategy with two types of instruments--achievement tests and rating scales. The "Inservice Evaluation Handbook" was created to provide assistance in developing these instruments. Although implementation difficulties emerged much progress was made in inservice evaluation. (Author/BS)

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EVALUATING INSERVICE TRAINING PROGRAMS:

DISTRICT RESPONSE TO STATE MANDATE

Toward a Standardization of Inservice Evaluation

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Abstract

Attempts to bring a sense of uniformity of measurement to inservice evaluation began with the classification of all inservice components. Using a classification system adapted from the Rand Change Agent Study, directors and supervisors were asked to categorize each unit of their inservice components in accordance with one of seven types of inservice. An appropriate evaluation procedure designed to provide evidence of the increased knowledge and skill of participants was then identified for each type of inservice. These activities culminated in the generation of an inservice classification system with a concomitant evaluation strategy.

Basically, the product evaluation procedures for each type of inservice component called for two types of instruments -- achievement tests and rating scales. In other words, the focus or content of an instrument (what it measured) would vary contingent upon component classification, but the nature of the instrument (how it measured) was fixed. A handbook was developed to provide assistance in the development of these evaluation instruments.

BACKGROUND

Pasco County's current inservice evaluation practices are the result of both state and local influences. In 1983, legislative changes significantly impacted evaluation by requiring that teacher education centers report attainment data based on measurable objectives. The emphasis was clearly on outcome in terms of participant learning. At the same time, within the county there was a growing concern for the manner in which inservices were evaluated. In some instances, participant gain was assessed quite rigorously, while in others, it was not. Therefore, in reexamining its evaluation of inservice, Pasco County sought to establish uniform (standard) procedures that would provide evidence of participant gain.

METHODOLOGY

Several important steps were taken toward this end of "standardized evaluation procedures". Components were grouped (classified), appropriate evaluation procedures identified, and a handbook developed to facilitate implementation of the new evaluation procedures. Each of these steps is described in detail below.

CLASSIFICATION OF COMPONENTS

Every inservice component was examined to determine commonalities for grouping purposes. A classification system adapted from the Rand Change Agent Study was used to facilitate this process. Directors and supervisors were asked to categorize their inservice components in accordance

with the following definitions:

I The unit is designed to motivate participants by providing them with ideas and/or information about a subject or trend. It is inspirational in tone.

II The unit is designed to get a group of participants together to share ideas (brainstorm) about a topic in order to assimilate the ideas received from a unit I type activity.

III The unit is designed to compare the information assimilated from units I and II to existing conditions in order to determine needs.

IV Once units I, II, and III types have been done, the purpose of unit IV is to plan.

V The unit is designed to provide personnel training in order to implement a plan. The performance skills are identified, and strategies to teach the skills are designed.

VI The unit is designed to review and evaluate activities described in units I - V. The purpose is to modify the steps described in units I - V.

VII There is a purpose for the unit other than what is described in I - VI.

The results of this classification exercise were reviewed and tabulated. Type seven (VII), the "other" category, was dropped as a viable category.

IDENTIFYING EVALUATION PROCEDURES

The next step entailed forming a committee to identify appropriate evaluation procedures for each type of inservice being offered in the county. Three district office staff members (the Director of Research and Evaluation Services, the Supervisor of Staff Development, and the Specialist for Program Evaluation Services) comprised the committee. The following schema which they proposed (and the county adopted) is presented in Table I.

TABLE 1: INSERVICE TYPE AND DESIGNATED EVALUATION PROCEDURES

INSERVICE TYPE	PURPOSE	EVALUATION FOCUS	EVALUATION PROCEDURE
I	To inform the participants about a subject or trend affecting organizational development.	Knowledge gained by the participants pertaining to the subject or trend.	A pre/posttest designed using a valid and reliable objective test.
II	To have participants develop and share ideas (brainstorm) pertaining to a subject or trend affecting organizational development.	Contribution to the group process by each participant.	A rating of the quality of the contributions for each participant. The component coordinator must establish the performance criteria.
III	To have participants analyze information for the identification of the specific requirements (needs) which must be met in order to adequately plan for organizational development.	Contribution to the group process by each participant.	A rating of the quality of the contributions for each participant. The component coordinator must establish the performance criteria.
IV	To have participants develop objectives, strategies, and evaluation procedures (a plan) designed to effect change in organizational development.	Contribution to the group process by each participant.	A rating of the quality of the contributions for each participant. The component coordinator must establish the performance criteria.
V	To provide participants with the knowledge or skill requirements necessary to implement strategies designed to effect change in organizational development.	Knowledge gained by the participants pertaining to requirements to implement strategies designed to effect change in organizational development.	A pre/posttest design using a valid and reliable objective test.
VI	To have participants analyze evaluation results for the identification of needed modification to objectives, strategies, or evaluation procedures.	Contribution to the group process by each participant.	A rating of the quality of the contributions for each participant. The component coordinator must establish the performance criteria.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE HANDBOOK

One final step was undertaken to ensure implementation of the county-adopted evaluation procedures. A handbook was created to provide assistance with the development of evaluation instruments for inservice components. The goal was to develop a "cookbook" (to be used by educators of varying backgrounds and abilities) which would result in instruments of high quality.

Since clearly stated and measurable objectives are fundamental to product evaluation, the first section of the handbook was devoted to writing behavioral objectives. The approach was to move from objectives defining the specific competencies to be gained, to a test custom-fitted to those objectives.

As discussed earlier, appropriate evaluation procedures for each type of inservice component were identified. Basically, the designs called for two types of instruments - achievement tests and rating scales. In other words, if a component was identified as type I or V (information/testing), the evaluation instrument would be an achievement test. Similarly, if a component was identified as type II, III, IV, or VI (performance-based), the evaluation instrument would be a rating scale. The focus or content of the instrument (<u>what</u> it measured) would vary contingent upon component classification, but the nature of the instrument (<u>how</u> it measured) was fixed.

Therefore, subsequent sections of the handbook discussed the mechanics of developing achievement tests and rating scales. The issues of planning the test, writing and refining items,

test form/physical appearance, and reliability and validity were also addressed.

The final section of the handbook described procedures for submitting instruments for approval. This review process was a quality control measure for ensuring that all inservice evaluation instruments met certain minimum standards. Prior to staging an inservice, the proposed evaluation instrument was to be submitted (for approval to the District Office, Department of Research and Evaluation Services along with the following:

1. a list of specific learner objectives;
2. an outline of the inservice's content;
3. a description of the delivery format (lecture, discussion, "hands-on", etc;
4. an identification of the target group (recipients of the inservice);
5. the delivery date (when the inservice would be held).

IMPLEMENTATION DIFFICULTIES

During the months following county adoption of the new evaluation procedures, several implementation difficulties emerged. Basically, three areas proved troublesome - commitment to serious evaluation, proficiency at writing behavioral objectives, and early submission requirements. Each area is discussed separately below.

COMMITMENT TO SERIOUS EVALUATION

In the initial stages, the usual resistance to change was encountered. Many directors and supervisors complained

about the inordinate amount of time that would be required to develop suitable instruments. Another frequent complaint focused on the problems surrounding use of consultants to deliver inservice. Either the consultants did not always deliver the intended content, or they had their own manner of assessing the inservice - not necessarily consistant with the county procedures.

DIFFICULTY WRITING OBJECTIVES

Once those responsible for developing evaluation instruments got down to the task at hand, other problems emerged. For many, it was difficult moving from broad program objectives to specific performance objectives. Related to this was a weakness in the ability to identify key elements of a learner behavior (for measurement purposes).

EARLY SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The greatest difficulty encountered regarding inservice evaluation instruments stemmed from early submission requirements. In our county, all components were due for approval in March. Notification of approved components did not occur until August. Some components with vague or very broadly stated objectives were approved. Later, as the actual staging date approached, the content was developed. Sometimes it was developed by a person other than the one who wrote the objectives. This often led to situations where the content did not fit the objectives. On other occasions, difficulties arose in attempting to write test items for components with poorly stated objectives.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the noted difficulties, much progress was made last year in the area of inservice evaluation. Perhaps the greatest factor contributing to successful implementation of the new evaluation procedures was the staging of work sessions. The purpose of those sessions was to afford an opportunity to practice the mechanics of writing test items. Directors and supervisors attended the work sessions armed with the broad objectives and any material relevant to an inservice component of their choice. During the sessions they were able to work as a group on certain concepts, but the specific content was different for each participant.

The establishment of a review process for approving instruments (or recommending revisions) was critical to the maintenance of an effective evaluation system. It also made a strong statement regarding administration's commitment to sound evaluation practices.